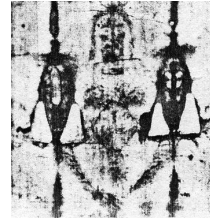


SHROUD NEWS

A NEWSLETTER ABOUT THE HOLY SHROUD OF TURIN
By REX MORGAN - Author of PERPETUAL MIRACLE



Issue No. 16

January 1983



Author REX MORGAN at left with KEN STEVENSON co-author of VERDICT ON THE SHROUD (which is noticed in this issue) and VERNON MILLER chief STURP photographer during a discussion in Santa Barbara, California in 1981

PHOTO CREDIT: JOHN LEWIS, Brooks Institute, California, USA

EDITORIAL

Once again I have left you waiting for SHROUD NEWS for too long and I can only plead pressure of agenda in the past few months. In this issue number 16 I have devoted most of the space to an article based on three very interesting pieces which came to me about the same time in the middle of 1982. The first is the book VERDICT ON THE SHROUD which caused rather more than a stir when it was published in the United States towards the end of 1981. The second is a series of articles from the Skeptical Inquirer and the third is a pamphlet by Father Peter Rinaldi published during the same year.

Those SHROUD NEWS readers who have subscribed to the Indiana Center for Shroud Studies SHROUD SPECTRUM will have been delighted with the last two issues which maintain their quality of scholarship and production.

I have received further correspondence from Rinaldi, Otterbein, Filas, Dreisbach, Coero-Borga and others and the discussion and research on the Holy Shroud continues unabated throughout the world. The British Society has produced its third new format Newsletter and a recent issue has come from the Holy Shroud Guild of New York.

You will, I hope be pleased to know that I am already preparing material for the next issue of SHROUD NEWS which I intend should be in your hands towards the end of February or early March.

I am also hopeful that when I go towards London about Easter-time to meet one of my sons who is at the moment on an archeological expedition in Jordan, I may be able to meet Rinaldi in Turin, again visit Coero-Borga at the International Centre for Sindonology, catch up with Dr Max Frei in Zurich and renew acquaintance with the British experts on the Shroud.

All this will hopefully make more news for my readers in Australia, to every one of whom I now wish a very Happy New Year.

REX MORGAN

THE VERDICT, THE SKEPTIC AND THE CHAMPION by REX MORGAN

This article refers to the following publications:

KENNETH E. STEVENSON and GARY R. HABERMAS:

Verdict on the Shroud

(Servant Books, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1981)

MARVIN M. MUELLER:

The Shroud of Turin: A Critical Appraisal

(The Skeptical Inquirer, Vol VI, No 3, 1982, New York)

WALTER McCRONE:

Shroud Image is the Work of an Artist

(The Skeptical Inquirer, as above)

STEVEN D. SCHAFERSMAN:

Science, the Public, and the Shroud of Turin

(The Skeptical Inquirer, as above)

PETER M. RINALDI:

On Disproving the Shroud of Turin

(Port Chester, New York, 1982)

At a time in the study of the Holy Shroud when most of the 1978 scientific research results have been published, when in the past four years the matter has attracted more publicity and media attention than perhaps in its whole history, the discussion, the argument, the passion, the battle, the dogma, the controversy, the subjectivity has entered a new era of volume and pitch which transcends the two periods of major public skirmish in the past, namely around the turn of the century when both science and religion took one or another side and when in the middle ages the original disputer of the Shroud's authenticity, Pierre d'Arcis made his statement to the Pope claiming he had evidence from the man who so cunningly painted the image on the cloth.

The Verdict, the Skeptic and the Champion (contd)Objectivity and Subjectivity

Before, during and following the 1978 exposition and subsequent investigations by the Shroud of Turin Research Project (STURP) team and others, we have had a large number of scientific papers on many aspects of the tests, we have seen numerous claims and counterclaims about the general authenticity or fraudulence of the cloth and we have read numerous specific arguments about the detail of results. These have rarely been totally objective and it leads me to think that a study of objectivity must lead to the conclusion that true objectivity cannot exist in the framework of human life and thought. And would someone give me a good reason why it should? Our whole lives are dependent upon subjective assessments of everything we do based on learned or inherited environmental and cultural factors. I find little evidence for there being such a phenomenon as total objectivity and even if there were a way of presenting objective data then the recipient of it could not be expected to interpret it objectively but would immediately be affected by the subjective influences at work in his mind.

No agreement

And, as with everything else in human affairs, there is evidence of conflict not only between identifiable groups of aligned individuals such as the Church and its devout adherents on the one hand and those who claim to be totally atheistic, sceptical scientists on the other, but also within these groups. We see churchman arguing against churchman; scientist against scientist, some members even of STURP taking legal injunctions against other members of STURP; the Italians suggesting that the Americans did some tests wrongly; the British suggesting that neither did them properly; and so on. But all this makes for interesting reading and stimulates further discussion and study of the whole problem of the Shroud.

Running through most of the current and recent comment is the thread that nothing can ever be proved either way, that all the evidence is subject to circumstance and that each person who may be so minded must decide for himself whether he believes in the Shroud's authenticity or its fraudulence or a partial acceptance of both.

The Verdict, the Skeptic and the Champion (contd)

About the only thing the majority of commentators agree on is that there will never be agreement no matter what else science produces.

A review

Without pretending, then, to be objective myself, simply because one cannot be, one can only at times claim to try to be, let me comment on three recent sets of documents which have come into my hands. The first is the book VERDICT ON THE SHROUD by Stevenson and Habermas; the second is a series of three articles in the Skeptical Inquirer; the third is Peter Rinaldi's paper ON DISPROVING THE SHROUD OF TURIN.

All of these items deserve much fuller description and discussion than I am likely to write in this piece and I hope to devote more time to something more substantial about them in the future. There is no doubt that they will receive considerable attention in my next book on the Holy Shroud on which I am presently working.

Clandestinely got

Ken Stevenson, a member of the Shroud of Turin Research Project, and Gary R. Habermas, associated with the Project and a minister in the United Brethren Church published their book coincident with the symposium held in New London, Connecticut, in October 1981 (to which I was invited but regrettably which I could not attend!). The content of the book, which appeared to claim total agreement from the members of STURP and to speak conclusively for them caused such a sensation that members of the team took out Federal Court injunctions against the publisher to attempt to suppress it. Just as the symposium got under way another court lifted the suppression order and copies of the book and much comment flew in all directions. Indeed, my copy clandestinely got to me without its dust-jacket (upon which Stevenson had been described as 'the team spokesman and editor for the Shroud of Turin Project') and with its page of acknowledgements torn out, in which the members of the STURP team had been named. When I was given it, it was as though I might have been handling a book in a plain paper wrapper which might have got me into gaol had I been found with it.

The Verdict, the Skeptic and the Champion (contd)

Proof of the Resurrection

Indeed, there is much to comment upon in VERDICT ON THE SHROUD. The early part of the book gives as good a resume of the history of the cloth and the various theories and work done on it as any other and it has an excellent selection of colour photographs. There are brief summaries of the various tests and the results up until the time of publication based on the STURP team's work, including the promotion of the scorch hypothesis for image formation.

The second part of the book, "Conclusions from the facts," is the part which excited and incited the other members of the scientific team since it sets out to show that the Shroud has been proved not to be a forgery, that the man buried in the Shroud was Jesus Christ, that there is evidence that this Christ did, as in the Christian view, die as a sacrifice for the sins of mankind, and that

"the historical arguments and the scientific arguments are very probable empirical indicators that Jesus did rise from the dead. When combined they provide a strong twofold argument for this event. The converging evidence is not proof, but it does show that the literal, physical resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth is by far the best explanation for the physical, chemical, medical and historical facts."

Miracles and Religion

Stevenson and Habermas went further and argued that miracles can and do occur and conclude their chapter on the Naturalism-Supernaturalism debate with these words:

"Thus it may be asserted that naturalism is incorrect. It is in error in that it does not take into account a large portion of reality. In particular, it fails to deal with theology and the part of man which was created in God's image. In spite of the popularity of naturalism, it is one of the greatest superstitions of our time. Indeed we have seen that this is a theistic universe where God has acted by raising his Son Jesus, in order to call men unto himself by faith. Such is rejected by many modern thinkers, yet it remains firmly established by the known facts. Eternity itself hangs in the balance."

The Verdict, the Skeptic and the Champion (contd)

Many modern thinkers were quick to criticise this aspect of VERDICT ON THE SHROUD.

Stevenson and Habermas went further still and argued that the authenticity of the Shroud gave a basis for the existence of and belief in all religion:

"If the Shroud is the authentic burial garment of Jesus, then God must have a purpose in preserving it at least until our day. The evidence indicates that it is authentic. Perhaps God means for the Shroud to encourage faith in an age when there are so many doubters and questioners, even among believers.

The Shroud just may initiate a new interest in this question since it provides such strong corroborating evidence for a theistic world view. What better validation could God have left than this highly probable, empirical, and historical evidence for Jesus's resurrection and the possibility of eternal life for each of us? Indeed, when skeptics asked him to verify his message, Jesus also pointed to his resurrection from the dead (Matthew 12:38-40)"

As Robert Bucklin said in his afterword in this book:

"It is unlikely that there will ever be a positive statement from any religious organisation that the Shroud of Turin is an authentic relic ... It is far better for the faithful to make their own judgement, based on factual data. This extraordinary book will be a great help to all who seek the truth."

The Subjective Skeptic

The SKEPTICAL INQUIRER is the Journal of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal. This seems to me to be a very legitimate group pursuing a very legitimate and useful exercise. It also seems to me, however, that the very use of the term 'skeptical' presupposes the subjective view that the paranormal is not acceptable to science or anyone else.

The Verdict, the Skeptic and the Champion (contd)

Are not all its articles, then, written from as subjective a point of view as those it seeks to be critical of? But did I not argue earlier that there is nothing wrong with this as it is unavoidable? I cannot therefore object to the Skeptical Inquirer being sceptical and therefore subjective. What I do find a little difficult is the pious posture its writers take in which they suggest that no scientist can possibly make a scientific observation or statement if he (or she - one had better add) has any religious view.

Marvin M. Mueller, for example, in his substantial article, shows his constant fear of the supernatural: that he is threatened by what he cannot explain according to the laws of Newton is very evident. He says:

"Science developed originally as an oasis of rational naturalism in the vast desert of superstition and supernaturalism that had existed since primitive times. It became a unique attempt to explain the observed world in its own terms - that is, without introducing supernatural forces. In all history, science has never been forced to resort to a supernatural or miraculous hypothesis to explain a phenomenon. Thus I wondered what unique observations, what total failure of naturalistic hypotheses, could have driven these men to embrace such a momentous break with scientific tradition?"

Pious assertions

Consider these pious assertions in his first paragraph:

"The main marvel of modern science is that useful, reliable, predictive knowledge *eventually* emerges from a chaos of contradictory opinions. These opinions are held by researchers who are all too obviously encumbered by common human frailties, such as fallibility. For this reason, science in its self-correcting aspect needs, and thrives upon, open, uninhibited airing of divergent opinions."

The Verdict, the Skeptic and the Champion (contd)

Having given, then, some assurance of objectivity the essay is filled with emotive and subjective expressions in describing the Shroud researchers such as: "the celebrated interpretation," "had a field day," "unanimous enthusiasm about having made a discovery tantamount to proof," "able to exert influence through the Holy Shroud Guild," "influential faction," "pathologists of obviously strong convictions," and so on.

One notes the human frailty of attacking on the non-scientific ground of implication that most of the STURP researchers were of a religious turn of mind and set themselves the task of proving something they wanted to prove. My little knowledge of scientific method suggests that all competent research begins with a hypothesis one hopes to prove. Mueller discards the majority of the findings of STURP as having been over-dramatised by the hungry media and the proposition that the supernatural is more interesting to the reading public than the natural. But surely this is the nub of the Holy Shroud problem: that scientists have attempted to come to grips with a phenomenon they cannot explain and journals like the *Skeptical Inquirer* are there, it seems, only to cast aspersions on anything supernatural rather than to inquire. What the twentieth century is surely realising is that there are many phenomena which science, with its man-made sets of rules and parameters, cannot explain within those rules and, indeed, the supernatural *is* far more interesting to the public than the natural.

Walter McCrone yet again

In a brief article in the same edition of the *Skeptical Inquirer* the notorious Walter McCrone again asserts his belief that the Shroud is a fake:

"The image was created by an artist who was commissioned to paint a shroud, probably to be used in religious processions or to be exhibited in the newly founded church in Lirey by the de Charny family. I doubt if the artist was intending to fool anyone, and I feel that the church vergers didn't have to make any conscious effort to convince the general populace that this was the shroud of Christ. I think the vergers did allow the populace to

The Verdict, the Skeptic and the Champion (contd)

come to that conclusion and, since that time, of course, most believers have so concluded ...

He naturally filled in the portions where the cloth touched the high points of the body and then artistically graded them in decreasing intensity from those high spots, thus creating a pleasing image and one which, it then turns out, automatically produced a photographic negative when copied photographically and indeed develops a three-dimensional structure when interpreted in terms of cloth-body distances as Jackson and Jumper did. There is nothing unusual about this and it was in fact entirely automatic. The artist, of course, certainly knew nothing about photographic negatives, nor did he think about three-dimensional reconstructions. Finally, I can see no possible mechanism by which the shroud image could have been produced except as the work of an artist. The faithful representation of all the anatomical and pathological markings, so well described in the New Testament, would be difficult to produce except by an artist. They are totally without distortion and, indeed, look exactly the way we would like to have them look."

Littered with emotion

In the third article Steven D. Schafersman delivers a blistering attack on Ian Wilson, Cullen Murphy and Stevenson and Habermas. It is unfortunate that he has linked Wilson, who produced by far the most authoritative and plausible explanation of every known aspect of the Holy Shroud at the time of his book THE TURIN SHROUD, with Stevenson and Habermas who unashamedly wrote a book from their (perfectly legitimate) Christian believers' point of view, although they appeared to do so in the guise of the STURP team's findings.

Schafersman's piece is even more littered with emotion than that of Mueller, a few examples being: "modern science's hopeless confusion and impotence before wonders of ancient origin," "this deplorable series of media events," "the latest space-age gadgetry" "this notorious religious relic".

The Verdict, the Skeptic and the Champion (contd)

He disposes of Max Frei by saying that he finds his conclusions incredible. He disposes of the generally accepted history of Christ by saying that if he existed, there are serious doubts that he was crucified; that if he was crucified, there are serious doubts that he died; and that, if he died, there are serious doubts (to say the least) that he was resurrected. He writes off the Roman authors as spurious, interpolated, ambiguous and equivocal and suggests that there is very little truth in the gospels.

Concerning the STURP scientists he says:

"I attribute the STURP members' credulity and lack of skepticism to their religious inclinations, and I attribute their assumed posture of scientific arch-positivism to their archaic beliefs of how real scientists are supposed to act."

On Jackson and Jumper:

"The 'three-dimensional' information that Jackson and Jumper found in the shroud is largely a creation of their own efforts."

On Filas:

"Filas has been getting a lot of newspaper publicity with his claim lately but unfortunately no one else in the world, including all the STURP scientists, agrees with him Father Filas's imagination has been working overtime."

His final sentence states that in the fourteenth century, Jeanne de Vergy and the Lirey clergy made money by exploiting a religious relic venerated by credulous pilgrims and even through six centuries some things never change. Indeed they do not, Mr. Schafersman and Mr. Skeptical Inquirer. Remember Pierre d'Arcis?

Champion of Shroud Study

Father Peter Rinaldi, the champion of Shroud study this century, the man who did most to bring about the STURP team's scientific examination of the Shroud in 1978 after its public exposition in Turin, has been moved by the articles in The Skeptical Inquirer

The Verdict, the Skeptic and the Champion (contd)

to publish a pamphlet of rebuttal of the arguments put forward by Schafersman and Mueller.

Rinaldi's preface reads:

"In two parallel articles in the Spring 1982 issue of *The Skeptical Inquirer*, Steven D. Schafersman and Marvin M. Mueller mount a savage attack against the Shroud of Turin and its researchers. The authors are properly skeptical, but hardly perceptive and objective inquirers. Half-truths, gratuitous assertions, misstatements of facts, and thinly veiled aspersions are part of a mishmash in which stale objections are served with feeble attempts to disprove the Shroud and confound its defendants.

The two articles are a classical demonstration on how not to disprove the Shroud."

Rinaldi then takes ten headings and in each of these he quotes from either or both author and proceeds to dispose of their arguments one by one.

Section I deals with the claim by them both that the Shroud is of immense importance to the Church which Rinaldi shows is not the case, concluding his argument by quoting Cardinal Ballestrero of Turin who said: "Christianity does not stand or fall with the Shroud"

The second section considers the claim by the sceptics that most Shroud researchers are themselves devout religious believers to which Rinaldi answers with the classic case of Pierre Barbet who, as an agnostic, set out to ridicule the Shroud earlier this century and finished up a believer. He also shows that the forty or so STURP scientists represent a normal spread of believers, agnostics and those in between.

He quickly disposes of the false claim that there is no specific mention of a shroud in the gospel accounts and that the present Shroud is contrary to normal methods of body-wrapping in the time of Christ.

Question IV deals with the resemblance or otherwise of the Shroud image to typical French Gothic art forms thus giving support to

The Verdict, the Skeptic and the Champion (contd)

the medieval forgery theory. Rinaldi quotes C. D. Viale:

"In all the art of the 14th century or in that of the period preceding it, there is no example, either in the West or the East, which can remotely compare with the Cloth of Turin."

Forgers again

Rinaldi disposes of Mueller's claims that pathologists who have described the anatomical detail of the image as being accurately correlated with the gospel descriptions have done so as a result of religious conviction and add to the forgery theory, by showing that several pathologists have based their reports on actual examination of the Shroud itself and furthermore show that no medieval forger could possibly have been conversant with such recently shown matters as the nailing through the wrists, the cap of thorns rather than the traditionally depicted circlet and the scourge marks, not to mention the negativity of the image.

In Section VI Rinaldi addresses himself to the question raised by both sceptics as to the possible duplication of the Shroud image by modern techniques. They have claimed that Joe Nickell has produced similar images to that on the Shroud by rubbing from a bas-relief with a mixture of powdered iron earth pigment and gelatin binder. Rinaldi challenges Nickell through his rebuttal to produce an image anything like the one on the cloth in terms of its detail, perfection and negativity.

Section VII deals with the question of pigment residual on the Shroud itself. Schafersman appears to swear by his support of McCrone's conclusions and claims that the cloth must be a forgery and Rinaldi points out the difficulties McCrone is having (which are apparent to many observers) by quoting a series of McCrone's statements which show that he is not at all convinced by what he says himself. Rinaldi shows that whatever amount of ferric oxide (the anchor of McCrone's claim) has been found on the cloth it can in no way account for the formation of the image.

In his eighth question Rinaldi disposes of the claim by Schafersman that the scientists have themselves claimed that the image was

The Verdict, the Skeptic and the Champion (contd)

produced supernaturally. The opposite is the case, as Rinaldi points out. The Archbishop of Turin had told the team: "If it is patently a forgery, we would like to know." In fact the scientists have been unable to say that it is a forgery and they have certainly not said anywhere that it was produced supernaturally.

Summary statement

In Section IX Rinaldi suggests that the sceptics examine the statement made by the STURP team in October 1981 which pointed out that a scientifically sound explanation of the image formation was simply not yet available to science, that scientific experiments have not yet produced a similar image and that its formation remains a mystery. The scientific conclusion was, however, that the Shroud image is not a forgery and that the bloodstains are composed of haemoglobin and that the whole problem remains unsolved.

In his final section Rinaldi raises again the fact that the burden of proof that the Shroud is fraudulent remains with the sceptics themselves. As he says in conclusion:

"Decades of sniping at this extraordinary object have left it unimpaired. It remains a truly remarkable *unicum* that may well continue to baffle, impress and inspire people for generations to come."

No doubt the academic arguments will continue to rage as each commentator considers some different point about the Shroud and until we have further evidence from more studies or further developments from the studies undertaken since 1978 so the mystery will continue. No doubt the next major raising of voices will occur when the decision is made to go ahead with carbon dating. There is enough controversy in various parts of the world about who should do this and how and where, to keep the protagonists at each other for a long time and when it is finally done there will be argument, no doubt, as to whether it was done properly irrespective of the result. Whether the dating indicates 2000 years or the Middle Ages or any other time all the other questions will remain to be answered.

The Verdict, the Skeptic and the Champion (contd)

Thus the subjectivity of mankind continues to add spice to all considerations of life including the Holy Shroud of Turin.

It is only sad, in my view, that some writers have to be unpleasant and vindictive towards each other whereas the whole issue of the Shroud, particularly since that remarkable and memorable day in August 1978 when about three hundred of us surged into Turin Cathedral to see it for the first time, has brought together so many of different nationality, race, background, training, religion, discipline, intelligence and motive in a genuine quest for the peaceful truth about one of the most remarkable artifacts in the history of mankind and which has been a source of co-operation, of influence, of puzzlement and of inspiration to millions of people in the past four years.

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SOME RECENT QUOTATIONS ABOUT SHROUD NEWS

"For you is always possible a beautiful résumé of current events with the best reviews and at the same time you know how to present the fundamental characteristics for a proper understanding of the Holy Shroud."

Fr. PIERO COERO-BORGA, International Centre, Turin

* * * * *

"Your Shroud News is superb."

Atlanta Center for Continuing Study of the Shroud of Turin

* * * * *

"You are doing a superb job! SHROUD NEWS makes interesting, refreshing reading, issue after issue."

Fr. Peter Rinaldi, Holy Shroud Guild, USA

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"You realise, of course, that you're our one hope in Australia to have a Shroud Guild for Australians."

JOHN WEST, Artist, Queensland, Australia

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Please encourage those of your acquaintance to join our subscription list. In this way we can only improve the newsletter in the future. Our four-issue subscription arrangement does not over-commit either the subscriber or the publisher although we do not anticipate the demise of the newsletter at the moment!

CONTRIBUTIONS

Please feel free to write to SHROUD NEWS with any comment about the newsletter itself or about the subject of the Holy Shroud of Turin. The newsletter goes to interested people all over Australia and to several other countries of the world.

FUTURE ISSUES

We have in hand much scientific and other material to provide copy for future issues. We receive the latest information from many international sources and author REX MORGAN draws on his frequent overseas visits for personal contact with people and institutions devoted to the study of the Holy Shroud.

LECTURES

Rex Morgan is happy to lecture (free of charge) to any group interested in the Holy Shroud. Contact Sydney 981 4633.

PUBLICATION

All information and opinion published in this newsletter is given in good faith to pass on to interested persons, matters concerning the Holy Shroud of Turin. It is edited (and mainly written) by REX MORGAN, author of PERPETUAL MIRACLE, and published by:

THE RUNCIMAN PRESS, Box 86, P.O., MANLY, 2095, NSW, Australia